- E. Prayer (Matthew 26:41)
- F. Study
- G. Fasting

Richard Foster: "More than any other Discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us. This is a wonderful benefit to the true disciple who longs to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ."

### **LIVE THE STORY**

The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community.

The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- What is the difference between the individual Christian life and an individualistic Christian life? Why is this important?
- What does the term spiritual formation refer to? What is its goal? Why is it important to the Christian life?
- ➤ What is the godliness which Paul tells us to train for? Have you ever thought of the idea of *training* in relation to godliness?
- Why do we need both community and solitude? Which do you naturally incline to, and which do you need to train for?
- > Do you have people you can talk to about your own spiritual formation and the practices you might need to focus on?
- ➤ Which of the practices for spiritual formation have you benefited from before? Are there some which this message has caused you to think about? How might you begin to practice them?

#### Spiritual Formation: The Journey to Christ-likeness

Jerry Cisar — May 14, 2017

Text: 1 Timothy 4:7-10

#### Introduction: What is Formation?

- A. Individual but not individualistic.
- B. Spiritual formation is focused on the goal.
  - i. Gal. 4:19
  - ii. Colossians 1:27

Dallas Willard: "...spiritual formation for the Christian basically refers to the Spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of the human self in such a way that it becomes like the inner being of Christ Himself....

Christian spiritual formation is focused entirely on Jesus. Its goal is an obedience or conformity to Christ that arises out of an inner transformation accomplished through purposive interaction with the grace of God in Christ. Obedience is an essential outcome of Christian spiritual formation."

# I. Spiritual Formation Requires Training (1 Timothy 4:7-10)

- A. ...train yourself...
  - i. Godliness requires training.
  - ii. A ruined word, "ascetic".
- B. ...train yourself to be godly. What is godliness?
  - i. Godliness is not *legalism*.

ii. Legalism has to do with being conformed to Jewish Law culture, godliness has to do with being conformed to Jesus.

# II. Spiritual Formation is Not Optional (Matthew 28:18-20)

- A. Disciple making, evidently consists primarily of two things:
  - i. Baptizing them
  - ii. Teaching them
- B. Obedience is being a sensible person. (Matthew 7:24-27)
- C. Formation is Discipleship.

# III. Spiritual Formation and You (How do we Train?)

- A. 3 Resources You Might Find Useful
  - i. Celebration of Discipline, Richard Foster.
  - ii. Sacred Pathways, Gary Thomas.
  - iii. Renovation of the Heart, Dallas Willard
- B. Gathering in Community

Geffrey Kelly: "'Christ existing as community' challenges believers to behave as Christ to one another; this same Christ promises those who gather in his name to be present in, with, and for them." Bonhoeffer: "The physical presence of other Christians is a source of incomparable joy and strength to the believer....Of course, what is an inexpressible blessing from God for the lonely individual is easily disregarded and trampled under foot by those who receive the gift every day. It is easily forgotten that the community of Christians is a gift of grace from the kingdom of God, a gift that can be taken from us any day—that the time still separating us from the most profound loneliness may be brief indeed...."

> Luke 2:46, 49

#### C. Solitude:

Richard Foster: "Our fear of being alone drives us to noise and crowds. We keep up a constant stream of words even if they are inane. We buy radios that strap to our wrists or fit over our ears so that, if no one else is around, at least we are not condemned to silence.... But loneliness or clatter are not our only alternatives. We can cultivate an inner solitude and silence that sets us free from loneliness and fear. Loneliness is inner emptiness. Solitude is inner fulfillment.

Bonhoeffer: "Whoever cannot be alone should beware of community. Whoever cannot stand being in community should beware of being alone."

Mark 1:35

- D. Meditation
  - i. Joshua 1:8
  - ii. Psalm 1:1-3